

## Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY P:POAKLEY:CHG

APPROVED BY P - MR HABIB

S/S - MR. SEBASTIAN

NEA - MR DAY

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 041645

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, XF

SUBJECT: BRIEFING ON MIDDLE EAST TRIP

1. FOLLOWING IS FYI ONLY: ON FEBRUARY 23 UNDER SECRETARY HABIB CALLED IN ISRAELI AMBASSADOR DINITZ, ACCOMPANIED BY BAR-ON, TO GIVE THEM RUNDOWN ON SECRETARY'S MIDDLE EAST TRIP. HE NOTED HE WAS ALSO GIVING ABBREVIATED BRIEFING TO GERMANS, FRENCH AND BRITISH IN THEIR CAPACITY AS EC-9 PRESIDENT AND US WANTED ISRAEL TO HAVE OUR IMPRESSIONS IN COMPLETE WAY.

2. TRIP OBJECTIVES: GENERAL FEELING IS THAT LIMITED OBJECTIVES WERE ACHIEVED AND US IS QUITE SATISFIED WITH TRIP. TRIP DEMONSTRATED US COMMITMENT TO WORK WITH AREA GOVERNMENTS TO MAKE PROGRESS THIS YEAR TOWARD PEACE AND WAS FIRST STEP IN THIS PROGRESS. IT PERMITTED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PERSONAL CONTACT WITH THE LEADERS TO PREPARE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS, AND THESE CONTACTS HAD BEEN A GREAT SUCCESS. FOLLOWING FORMAT IN ISRAEL, VANCE HAD HAD LITTLE PRIVATE

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CONVERSATION WITH ALL LEADERS. BY COVERING SYSTEMATICALLY SAME POINTS IN EACH COUNTRY WE WERE ABLE TO HEAR IN DETAIL VIEWS ON PROCEDURAL AND SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES.

3. CONCLUSIONS: WHILE ARAB AND ISRAELI CONCEPTS OF PEACE ARE VERY FAR APART, THERE IS CLEAR DETERMINATION BY ALL TO MAKE A SERIOUS EFFORT FOR SETTLEMENT. GENERAL MOTIVATING FACTOR IS BURDEN OF DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENTS. GENERAL CONSENSUS IS TO WORK FOR GENEVA CONFERENCE IN SECOND HALF OF 1977, WHICH IN PRACTICAL TERMS MEANS EARLY FALL. ALL CONCERNED WANT U.S. TO PLAY ACTIVE AND MAJOR ROLE SO CONFERENCE WILL BE MORE THAN A SYMBOL. IF THE PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS CAN BE RESOLVED ALL ARE AGREED TO GO TO GENEVA WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS. THEY ALSO AGREED THAT PRINCIPAL SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES ARE NATURE OF PEACE, WITHDRAWAL/BOUNDARY QUESTION, AND THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION. PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION REMAINS MAJOR PROCEDURAL QUESTION, BUT IS HAS SUBSTANTIVE OVERTONES.

4. POSITIONS OF PARTIES:

(A) PLO PARTICIPATION: ISRAEL POSITION IS CLEAR IN OPPOSITION TO ANY PLO PARTICIPATION. ON ARAB SIDE THERE ARE NUANCES AND THERE IS NO UNANIMITY. IT IS UP TO ARABS TO DECIDE ON A FORMULA AND U.S. MADE NO COMMITMENTS AND TOOK NO POSITIONS.

(B) NATURE OF PEACE: ISRAEL SEEKS A BROAD AGREEMENT FOR NORMAL RELATIONS; THE ARABS ARE MORE LIMITED AND SEEK END TO THE STATE OF BELLIGERENCY.

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(C) WITHDRAWAL/BOUNDARIES: ISRAEL IS PREPARED TO RETURN SUBSTANTIAL TERRITORY FOR REAL PEACE, BUT WITH DEFENSIBLE BORDERS. ARABS INSIST ON WITHDRAWAL TO 1967 BORDERS BUT WILLING TO DISCUSS A WHOLE RANGE OF SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS. THERE WAS NO SPECIFIC U.S. RESPONSE TO ANY OF THESE IDEAS.

(D) PALESTINIAN QUESTION: ISRAEL WAS FIRM AGAINST ANY PALESTINIAN STATE. ARABS SHOW FLUIDITY ON ISSUE WITH IDEA OF SOME LINKAGE TO JORDAN BUT NO PRECISION.

(E) FORM OF GENEVA: ISRAEL FAVORS BILATERAL FORMAT IN GENEVA FRAMEWORK, WHILE ARABS SEEM TO PREFER FUNCTIONAL SUBCOMMITTEES.

5. GENERAL IMPRESSIONS: ARABS HAVE FEELING THEY HAVE MADE PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ACCEPTANCE OF ISRAEL AND NOW IT IS ISRAEL'S TURN TO MODIFY ITS POSITION. GENERAL

ANXIETY THAT PEACE PROCESS WILL STALL AND MODERATES  
MAY FALL. ALL RECOGNIZE THAT THIS YEAR CANNOT BE A YEAR  
WITHOUT MOVEMENT AND ISRAELIS SEE THEY CAN'T JUST SIT

ON THEIR STRONG POSITION. BUT NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO GANG  
UP ON ISRAEL AT THE UN.

6. WHAT NEXT: INVITATIONS ISSUED AND ACCEPTED BY  
LEADERS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH PRESIDENT; RABIN  
IN MARCH; SADAT, FAHD, AND HUSSEIN IN APRIL, AND  
CARTER WILL MEET WITH ASAD IN EUROPE IN MAY. DURING  
THIS TIME ARAB POSITIONS WILL EMERGE MORE CLEARLY. WE  
WILL DEAL WITH USSR IN THE ROLE AS GENEVA CO-CHAIRMEN  
AND WE WILL KEEP WALDHEIM INFORMED. HOPE WE CAN  
STIMULATE FRESH THINKING IN THIS PERIOD TO BRIDGE  
SUBSTANTIVE GAPS ON ALL KEY ISSUES.

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7. DINITZ COMMENTED THAT THIS REPORT WILL BE HELPFUL  
FOR PREPARATIONS FOR PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT AND ASKED  
IF ARABS UNDERSTOOD THAT PRICE THEY CAN EXTRACT FOR END  
OF STATE OF BELLIGERENCY IS LESS THAN THAT FOR "REAL  
PEACE" AND IF THEY WOULD BE OPEN TO SOMETHING LESS  
AMBITIOUS. IN DISCUSSION HABIB POINTED OUT THAT THEY  
DO SEE DIFFERENCE BUT THAT IT MEANS LESS TO THEM,  
AND WHILE NOT MORE RIGID THEIR POSITION IS MORE CLEARLY  
DEFINED. HE SAID ARABS ARE THINKING IN TERMS OF OVER-  
ALL SETTLEMENT BUT LEFT OPEN WHAT ELSE MIGHT BE ADDED  
TO END OF STATE OF BELLIGERENCY.

8. DINITZ ALSO RAISED POINT THAT PLO PARTICIPATION  
QUESTION WAS SUBSTANTIVE PRECONDITION AND HABIB SAID  
ARABS RECOGNIZE THIS, AND PROCEDURAL GAMBITS WON'T WORK.  
PLO PARTICIPATION IS FIRST HURDLE AND IS BASICALLY  
SUBSTANTIVE. IN REPLYING TO QUESTION ON IMPRESSION  
OF SAUDI ARABIA, HABIB EXPLAINED THAT U.S. HAD DIS-  
TINCT IMPRESSION THAT THEY WERE PLAYING IMPORTANT  
ROLE AS MODERATOR, BRIDGE-BUILDER, AND ONE EVERYONE  
TURNED TO AFTER RIYADH. ISSUE OF JERUSALEM WAS HARDLY  
MENTIONED IN SAUDI ARABIA.

9. TURNING TO LEBANON, HABIB SAID THAT SARKIS FEELS  
VERY STRONGLY THAT HE HAS BEEN PUT IN A TERRIBLE POSI-  
TION. HE PULLED BACK FOR US AND TRIED TO PUT IN  
GENDARMES BUT THEY WERE CHASED OUT. IT WILL TAKE  
AT LEAST 3 MONTHS TO HAVE ANY EFFECTIVE LEBANESE  
FORCE AND SARKIS IS UNDER GREAT PRESSURE TO ASSURE  
SECURITY. HE ASSURED VANCE TEAM 5 TIMES OVER IT WASN'T  
DONE AS THREAT TO ISRAEL AND COULDN'T UNDERSTAND HOW

THEY SAW IT THAT WAY. SARKIS SAID SPECIFICALLY SOME SYRIANS ARE BEING REPLACED BY SAUDIS, SUDANESE OR TROOPS FROM UAE. AMBASSADOR PARKER WILL BE REPORTING

ON TRUE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON, AS LEBANESE  
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FACE THEIR INABILITY TO REASSERT SECURITY. SITUATION LEFT THAT WE WILL TALK TO EACH AGAIN, BUT HABIB HOPED ISRAEL WOULD NOT WANT TO PUSH RIGHT NOW.

10. DINITZ AND HABIB AGREED THAT PRESS LINE WOULD BE THEY HAD A GENERAL DISCUSSION OF MIDDLE EAST TRIP ONLY.

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## Message Attributes

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